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THE TRIADS.—No. VII.



TRIADS OF THE ISLE OF BRITAIN*.

xxxI. The three Banded Tribes of the Isle of Britain: the tribe of Caswallon Law Hir; the tribe of Rhiwallon, the son of Urien; and the tribe of Belyn of Lleyrn. That is, they were so named, because there was neither head nor sovereign over them, so far as the privilege of their families and territory extended, if they were questioned within such limits, but the voice of country and people prevailed.

[Caswallawn Law Hir, or Caswallawn with the Long Hand, was Sovereign of North Wales from 443 to 517, when he died after a reign of 74 years.—Rhiwallon lived also in the early part of the sixth century; and Belyn about a century later.—Other copies of this Triad † relate the circumstances thus. “The three Banded Tribes of the Isle of Britain: the tribe of Caswallon Law Hir, who put the fetters of their horses on their feet by two and two in fighting with Serigi Wyddel (Serigi the Irishman) at Cerrig y Gwyddyl (the Stones of the Irishmen) in Môn; and the tribe of Rhiwallon, the son of Urien, in fighting with the Saxons; and the tribe of Belyn of Lleyrn in fighting with Edwin at Bryn Ceneu (Bryn Edwin) in Rhos.”—The privilege, thus acquired by the three chiefs here named, secured their exemption from all superior jurisdiction save that of the jury of the country or national inquisition ‡.]

xxxII. The three Golden-banded Ones of the Isle of Britain: Rhiwallon Wallt Banadlen; Rhun, the son of Maelgwn; and Cadwaladr the Blessed. That is, it was given them to wear bands of gold about their arms, and about their necks, and about their knees; and thereto was attached the privilege of royalty in every country and territory of the Isle of Britain.

[Rhiwallon Wallt Banadlen, or Rhiwallon with the Broom Hair, lived about the middle of the sixth century, and is celebrated in another Triad as one of the “three men most distinguished for their knowledge of natural history.”—Rhun succeeded his father Maelgwn in the Sovereignty of North Wales about 560 and reigned till 586: he is also called one of the “three immaculate

* Arch. of Wales, vol. ii. p. 62—3. Tr. 27—33.

† Id. ib. p. 12 and 16.

‡ The words in the original are “rhaith gwlad,” which were explained in No. 4, p. 124.

Princes of Britain."—Cadwaladr was the last nominal King of the Britons. He abdicated the throne in 581 and retired to Brittany, from whence he went ultimately to Rome, where he died in 703. It was, in all probability, his dedication to a religious life at the latter place, that gave him the epithet of "blessed," appropriated to him in this Triad. There are two churches consecrated to Cadwaladr, one in Denbighshire and the other in Anglesey.—The following explanation of the names, here applied to these chieftains, occurs in the two other copies of this Triad*. "Those men were so called gold-banded ones, for that no horses could be obtained suitable for them on account of their size, so that golden bands were put round their ankles over the haunches of their horses behind them with two pans of gold under their knees; and hence the knee-pan was so named."—From this explanation it does not appear, that the "golden bands," mentioned in this Triad, were of the same nature with the *torch* or *torques*, so generally worn by the ancient Britons as a mark of distinction. Indeed the expression in the original is *hualogion*, which means strictly "golden fettered;" whereas *aurdorehogion* would have been used to designate the wearers of golden chains. This, therefore, is not the proper opportunity for offering any remarks on that ancient custom.]

xxxiii. The three Cavaliers of Battle of the Isle of Britain: Caradawg with the Brawny Arm, and Llyr the Armipotent, and Mael ab Menwed of Arllechwedd. And Arthur sang to them the following *englyn* :—

Sef ynt fy nhri Chadfarchawg,
Mael Hir a Llyr Lluyddawg,
A cholofn Cymry Caradawg †.

That is to say, they were the best of all battle-horsemen: and therefore dominion and power were given them as they chose. And it was their disposition to do nothing but what was discreet and just, to whatever country or power they came.

[Caradawg, here mentioned, was a Prince of the Cornish Britons during the sixth century, of which period were also Llyr and Mael. They were all three likewise contemporaries of Arthur, and fought in his battles, as may be inferred from the *englyn* here

* Arch. of Wales, vol. ii. p. 5 and 17.

† These are my three Cavaliers of Battle,
Mael the Tall and Llyr the Armipotent,
And that Pillar of the Cymry Caradawg.

quoted, and which, in all probability, was added by some ancient annotator.]

xxxiv. The three Generous Princes of the Isle of Britain: Rhydderch the Generous, the son of Tudwal Tudelud; and Mordav the Generous, the son of Servan; and Nudd the Generous, the son of Senyllt. Their principles were, that they failed not as to any thing in the world whatsoever to such as besought it, whilst they possessed it, or could obtain it by gift or loan, or present; whether sought by friend or foe, relative or stranger.

[Rhydderch, who is frequently celebrated by the old poets for the quality here ascribed to him, was a Prince of the Stradelyde Britons during the early part of the sixth century. He signalised himself as a warrior on several occasions. —Mordav and Nudd were contemporary with Rhydderch: the latter was descended in a direct line from Maxen Wledig, the Emperor Maximus or Maxentius, according to the Chronicle the 79th King of Britain at the close of the fourth century.]

xxxv. The three Crimson Spotted Ones of the Isle of Britain: Arthur, Morgan the Courteous, and Rhun the son of Beli. When they went to war, no one would remain at home, so greatly were they beloved; and there was neither war nor conflict, but they were victorious in it, where there was neither treachery nor ambush, and therefore came the proverb, “The three men, who made men wherever they went, were Arthur, Morgan the Courteous, and Rhun the son of Beli: the three people, who made men wherever they came, were the men of Arthur, the men of Morgan the Courteous, and the men of Rhun the son of Beli.”

[According to Caradog's History Morgan, here mentioned, was a Prince of Glamorgan during the ninth century. And he is stated to have died in 1001 at the advanced age of 129 years, having lived to see the dominions, which he had abdicated, enjoyed both by his children and grandchildren. —Some account of Arthur was given in the last Number *. —The chieftain, here called Rhun, if he be not the same that is mentioned in the last Triad but one, was the great-grandson of Maelgwn, Prince of Gwynedd, and must have lived in the beginning of the seventh century. —In the other copies of this Triad Llew Llawgyfes, who lived in the fifth century, supplies the place of Arthur, who is, however, made supreme over the other three for the distinction conferred on the chieftains here mentioned. —The epithet “crimson-spotted,” here

* P. 204.

used, is, we may suppose, synonymous with "blood-stained." The word in the original is *rhuddfanogion*.]

xxxvi. The three Hostile Ovates of the Isle of Britain: Greid-iawl the Hostile Ovate, and Envael the son of Adran, and Trystan the son of Tallwch. And they had the privilege that none could oppose them, wheresoever they wished to go in the Isle of Britain, so that they did not go unlawfully.

[It is difficult to say precisely what is meant by the term, here rendered "hostile ovate." The Welsh word is *galofydd*, which will also bear the interpretation of "regulator of hostility."—*Gal* means literally a stranger or enemy (for the terms were anciently synonymous); and *ofydd* was the appellation given to one of the orders of Bardism*. *Galofydd* may, therefore, imply one of those privileged heralds, belonging to a strange tribe or nation, who, as we find from the Convention-Triads of Dywnwal Moel-mud, alluded to in the last Number †, had, under the civil constitutions of the Cymry, a right of unobstructed progression through the country, exactly as stated in this Triad.—The three persons, here named, all lived about the sixth century.—Trystan, who is commemorated in several other Triads, is the same personage with Sir Tristram, hero of the Romance of that name written by Tho. of Ercildum ‡.—In the two other copies of this Triad Gwgon Gwron, also a chief of the sixth century, is substituted for Envael and with the greater appearance of being correct.]

xxxvii. The three Obstructors of Slaughter of the Isle of Britain: Grudneu, Henben, and Aedenawg; and their qualities were, that they went not out of battle and war but on their biers, when they were not able to move either finger or tongue.

[It appears, from all that can now be learnt of these warriors, that they were sons of Gleisiar, a chieftain of the Northern Britons about the close of the fifth century, a period, which called forth the martial energies of that people in a peculiar manner, from the

* The *Ofydd* or *Ovate* was emphatically the Poet of the Bardic System. The Institutional Triads describe his peculiar function to be the exercise of poetical genius. Strabo and Ammianus Marcellinus make particular mention of the *Ovate* as one of the three Druidical orders: and hence, most probably, was derived the *Vates* of the Romans. The office of herald was expressly assigned to the *Ofyddion* during their three years' probation previous to their admission into the higher orders of Bardism.

† P. 210, in the Note.

‡ Mr. Walter Scott has recently published a new Edition of this old Romance.

frequent contests, to which they were exposed with the Saxons and Picts.—The other copies of this Triad give them the designation of the “three brave ones,” an expression perfectly consistent with the more remarkable one here adopted.]

TRIADS OF WISDOM*.

XLII. The three objects of intellect: the right, the beautiful, and the beneficial.

XLIII. Three things, which are to be found in every country: agriculture, law, and religion, that is, worship.

XLIV. Three things which demoralize a man: fear, cupidity, and ignorance.

XLV. Three things difficult to be overcome: courage, love, and conscience.

XLVI. Three things not much thought of until it becomes too late: the counsel of a friend, the warning of age, and the dictate of conscience.

XLVII. Three things which, though they receive daily without intermission, yet seek for more: the sea, the thought, and the miser.

XLVIII. Three things, which ought ever to be kept open: the ear, the eye, and the understanding.

XLIX. Three things best to be kept closed, unless there shall be just cause: the hand, the lips, and the thought.

L. Three things which make a man worse than a beast: the loving of his belly, the loving of riches, and the loving of the praise of men more than the favour of God.

LI. Three things, which make a man equal with an angel: the love of every good, the love of charity, and the love of pleasing God.

THE WISDOM OF CATWG.



MORAL APHORISMS*.

Thy word by keeping thou wilt keep thy face,
 Keep good thy memory wisdom will thee grace:
 By checking of thy hand thy good is sure;
 Keep fame by peace, which doth thy fame procure:

* Arch. of Wales, vol. iii. p. 209.

† Ibid. vol. iii. pp. 6, 13 and 14.